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THANKSGIVING SERMON,

PREACH'D

November 5. 1712.

At Mr. PIGGOTT's Meeting-House
in *Little Wildstreet.*

By JOSEPH BURROUGHS.

*Psal. 75. 1. Unto thee, O God, do we give Thanks ;
unto thee do we give Thanks : for that thy Name is
near, thy wondrous Works declare.*

L O N D O N,

Printed by J. Darby, and Sold by J. Baker at
Mercers-Chappel in Cheapside. M.DCC.XIII.

(Price 4 d.)

A

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At Mr. PIERCE'S Meeting-House



By JOSEPH BURROUGHS.

Phil. 1. 3. 11. Give thanks, O God, for the Lord Jesus Christ, who has made us able to stand in the Word of the Lord, and to give thanks in all names of the Lord our Lord Jesus Christ, for the Word of the Lord, and for the Word of the Lord.

LONDON

Printed by J. Duff, and sold by A. Baker at
St. Dunstons Church in Cambridge. MDCCLXII.

(Price 4s.)

PSALM XXXVI. 7.

*How excellent is thy Loving-Kindness, O God!
therefore the Children of Men put their
Trust under the shadow of thy Wings.*

THE latter End of this Psalm, wherein David prays, that the Foot of Pride may Ver. 11.
not come against him, nor the Hand of the
Wicked remove him, makes it probable,
that when he compos'd it, he was persecuted by Saul. And that which adds to the Probability is, that the Characters of Ungodliness, of Treachery and deliberate Malice, mention'd in the four first Verses, agree very well to such as labour'd by all possible means to procure the Destruction of an innocent Man.

The Life of David, and of his few Companions were threaten'd, and with the greatest Violence sought after by a Prince, to whom he had given no occasion of Offence; whose chief Quarrel with him was, that God had prosper'd his Uprightness, and deservedly given him the Favour of the People. The King had conceiv'd a mortal Hatred against him, for the Praises which the People too lavishly bestow'd on him, at his return from the Slaughter of the Philistines. We are told, 1 Sam. 18. 6, 7. *That the Women came out of all Cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul with Tabrets, with Joy, and with Instruments of Musick: And the Women answer'd one another as they play'd, and said, Saul hath slain his Thousands, and David his Ten Thousands.* In the following Verses we are inform'd of the King's Anger and Jealousy. He concluded, that because the People in general lov'd David, and the Singers had unadvisedly prefer'd his Exploits before

A Thanksgiving SERMON,

1 Sam. 18.
10.

his own; therefore undoubtedly *David* was a Traitor in his Heart, and sought the Kingdom: and from that day forward he narrowly watch'd his Actions. The next day the *evil Spirit*, that wicked Spirit of Jealousy, came upon Saul with unusual Violence, and very probably discover'd it self in unnatural Gestures of the Body; which he, to hide the Malice of his Heart, labour'd to conceal, under the pretence of prophetick Inspiration: for we are told, ver. 10. *That he prophesy'd in the midst of the House*; that is, before all the Court. As the King had been often troubled with these Disorders, *David*, according to his usual Custom, endeavour'd to compose him, by playing upon his Harp; but by this means he endanger'd his own Life, having a Javelin thrown at him by the King's Hand.

Ver. 13.

When open Violence did not prevail, a plausible Design was form'd against *David's* Life: *The King remov'd him from his Presence, and made him Captain over a thousand Men.* Notwithstanding the late Victory, *Israel* was still very much infested by the *Philistines*: *David* therefore had a Commission bestow'd upon him, on purpose to give him an occasion of falling by the Enemies Hands. But he was, it seems, so well qualify'd for his Imployment, and by his Courage, Wisdom and Address, gain'd such universal Esteem, that the unhappy King's Jealousy increas'd upon him. In ver. 14, 15, and 16. we are told, *That David behav'd himself wisely in all his ways, and the Lord was with him. Wherefore when Saul saw that he behav'd himself very wisely, he was afraid of him: But all Israel and Judah lov'd David, because he went out and came in before them.*

Ver. 19.

But the King thought he had not been sufficiently expos'd to danger; and therefore laid an unexpected Temptation in his way, to excite him to some desperate Action: Ver. 17. *And Saul said to David, Behold my elder Daughter Merab, her will I give thee to Wife; only be thou valiant for me, and fight the Lord's Battles: for Saul said, Let not mine Hand be upon him, but let the Hand of the Philistines be upon him.* *Merab* was indeed given to another Man, but then

then her Sister *Michal's* Love to *David* renew'd the Temptation of venturing upon some desperate Exploit, for the Honour of becoming the King's Son-in-law. In *ver. 25.* we are inform'd that *Saul* imploy'd his Servants thus to treat with him: *Thus shall ye say to David, The King desireth not any Dowry, but an hundred Foreskins of the Philistines, to be aveng'd of the King's Enemies: But Saul thought to make David fall by the hands of the Philistines.* But neither did this Plot succeed: for instead of one hundred, *Da-* Ver. 27.
vid kill'd two hundred of the *Philistines*; and as a Reward, gain'd the Honour of being ally'd to the King.

Saul's Fears increasing upon so many Interpositions of God's Providence in behalf of his Servant, he commanded *Jonathan his Son, and all his Servants to kill him,* Chap. 19. 1. The young Prince was more generous than his Father, and tho against his own Ch. 19. 4, 5.
Interest, pleaded for his Friend's Life, and prevail'd: But yet after this, the first time that *David* came into the King's Presence, he narrowly escap'd with his Life: for the curfed Spirit of Jealousy return'd upon *Saul* again, *David* having gain'd a fresh Victory over the *Philistines,* chap. 19. 8. The King was not contented to have thrown another Javelin at him, while Ver. 9, 10.
he was endeavouring, with the softest Notes of Musick, to quiet his unjust Rage, but sent Messengers to Ver. 11.
kill him in his own House.

'Twas now high time for *David* to consult his own Safety; which he did, by betaking himself to flight. He was forc'd to avoid the King's Presence: and tho for some time after this he remain'd in the Kingdom; yet it was not long before he found it necessary to go and shelter himself under the protection of other Princes.

It was, no doubt, a melancholy Prospect for the People of *Israel,* to behold the best and most useful Man in the Nation banish'd from his native Country, merely for his Fidelity, and his other excellent Qualities. No faithful Subject was under such a Government secure of his Liberty; none could tell whose would be the next Lot to be turn'd out of all. But 'tis no wonder that a Prince, who gave himself up to unrea-

A Thanksgiving SERMON,

unreasonable Passions, and had no regard to his own true Honour, should suffer himself to be thus misguided; especially if we consider, that very probably his Court was throng'd with a number of worthless Men, whose Envy prompted them to procure their own Advancement by *David's* Ruin.

But *Saul's* Malice did not end in *David's* Banishment; he must be pursu'd as a Traitor: probably because a few of his Friends had voluntarily join'd themselves with him to comfort him in his Exile, and to prevent his being surpriz'd by sudden Danger.

1 Sam. 26. 2. The King imploy'd a considerable number of Men,
Ch. 24. 13. and led them himself in the Pursuit: But his Purposes were continually defeated, and himself twice deliver'd into *David's* Hand; who, if he had been treacherously inclin'd, might easily have taken away his Enemy's Life.

Now the Hardship of *David's* Banishment, and the continual Danger he was in, might very well make him reflect upon the Unreasonableness, and Cruelty of *Saul* and his Counsellors, and of all those who actually assisted him in the pursuit of an innocent Life.

To this purpose he signifies in the first Verse of the Psalm, wherein is our Text, that he could not help concluding, from the Actions of wicked Men, *that there is no Fear of God before their Eyes*. In the three following Verses he proves the Truth of this Assertion, by observing, that wicked Men shut their own Eyes from the Acknowledgment of God, by flattering themselves till their Sin is discover'd and expos'd; that as they deceive themselves, so they labour by subtle Pretences and insinuating Speeches to deceive others, having no regard to true Wisdom, which inclines Men to do good; that they deliberately contrive Mischief in secret, and imploy themselves in unrighteous Practices with the greatest Delight: *For he flattereth himself in his own Eyes, until his Iniquity be found out to be hateful. The Words of his Mouth are Iniquity and Deceit; he hath left off to be wise, and to do good. He deviseth Mischief upon his Bed, he setteth himself in a way that is not good, he abhorreth not Evil.*

But

But these Thoughts, tho very unpleasant, did not, it seems, so much discourage the Psalmist, as the remembrance of God's Perfections gave him occasion to rejoice and give thanks. In *ver. 5.* he celebrates the Mercy and Faithfulness of God, as exceeding our comprehension as far as the Heavens are above our reach. *Thy Mercy, O Lord, is in the Heavens; and thy Faithfulness reacheth unto the Clouds.* In *ver. 6.* he represents the Righteousness of God; that is, his Counsels relating to the Government of the World, and his Judgments, which are the execution of those Counsels, as being *very high*, like the *great Mountains*; and he compares them likewise to a *great Deep*. By both which Expressions he signifies, that the Methods of divine Providence are unsearchable. He moreover speaks of God as the *preserver of Man and Beast*; signifying his universal Love and Good-Will to every Work of his Hands.

In our Text, he considers the Excellency of God's Loving-Kindness, particularly with relation to Men.

There are in the Words two things contain'd.

I. An admiration of the Excellency of God's Loving-Kindness. *How excellent is thy Loving-Kindness, O God!*

II. A Reflection upon the Incouragement which this affords for our trusting in his Protection. *Therefore the Children of Men put their Trust under the shadow of thy Wings.*

I. We are to consider *David's* admiration of the Loving-Kindness of God.

There is a peculiar force in the manner of Expression: When the Psalmist cries out with Wonder and Astonishment, *How excellent is thy Loving-Kindness, O God!* he lets us see that his most rais'd Thoughts had been exercis'd in contemplating so noble a Subject; but that he fell infinitely short of its due estimation; that God's Loving-Kindness far exceeded all Conception, and much more surpass'd the power of Words to express.

But

A Thanksgiving SERMON,

But tho all Descriptions must needs fall infinitely beneath the Dignity of this Subject; we are not for that reason to avoid setting forth, as far as we are able, the Excellency of it. On the contrary, 'tis both our Duty and Advantage to be frequently employ'd this way; especially when any particular Instances of divine Favour give new Occasion for it. I shall therefore mention some few Particulars, wherein the Excellency of God's Loving-Kindness does appear.

The word, which in our Text is render'd *Loving-Kindness*, is the same with what in *ver. 5.* is call'd *Mercy*. It includes the general Inclination and Readiness of the Divine Being to do Good; and particularly signifies, that Pity or Compassion which he bears toward the Miserable: It regards the Affection of Love, as it is in the Divine Nature; and likewise the happy Effects of it, with relation to Men.

Now, in shewing the Excellency of this *Mercy or Loving-Kindness*, we shall consider it as being admirable in it self; and in comparison with Mens Affection and Behaviour towards each other.

1. It is Excellent in it self; as it is guided by unsearchable Wisdom; as it is attended with Almighty Power; as it is constant and unchangeable; and as it is bestow'd upon Creatures who do not deserve it.

1. The Loving-Kindness of God is above all Things to be esteem'd, as it is guided by infinite Wisdom; which adapts the most proper Supplies to our respective Wants. The wonderful Love of God to Men, makes him employ his Wisdom to contrive what will be most for their real Service, in any exigency of Affairs. And that divine Wisdom which is the Original of all human Knowledg, can never fail of understanding when any particular Blessing will come the most seasonably, or be at a loss for the Means of effecting it. That God who made the Hearts of Men, assuredly understands all their secret Springs of Motion; and knows perfectly well whatever can distress; or make them joyful. If the Soul be terrify'd with Reflections upon its own Guilt, the Spirit of God can give intimations of Pardon; and direct to the Methods of obtaining it. If Trouble arises from without; particularly

cularly from the Violence of unreasonable Men, the Wisdom of God can easily provide the necessary Remedy, to which his Love prompts him: He who has the Hearts of all Men in his Hand, can turn them as the Rivers of Water, whithersoever he pleases. He can make our Enemies our Friends; or if they persist in their Enmity, can disappoint their Counsels, and turn them against themselves. He can either cut off the Means of executing their Resolutions; or by something to them unforeseen, intirely break their Measures. And these things the Love of God inclines him to do in behalf of his Servants, when their Deliverance from any Temporal Distress will make for their real Advantage; of which infinite Wisdom is best able to judg. Thus, tho the *Wisdom of God*, and his *Loving-Kindness*, bear two distinct Notions, and the one is not a part of the other; yet as they are inseparable Qualities in the Divine Nature, the one renders the other inexpressibly valuable.

2. The infinite Power of God in like manner renders his Favour preferable to all other things: For there is nothing which the Love of God can prompt him to do for his Servants, which his Power cannot effect. That Power by which all Things were made, must needs be superior to its own Effects; and therefore 'tis easy with God to dispose of all the parts of his Creation, according to the good pleasure of his own Will. 'Tis in vain for created Nature to resist its Maker, and consequently for mortal Man to contend with God. He can say to the greatest Potentate upon Earth, what he said to Job, chap. 40. 9, &c. *Hast thou an Arm like God? Or canst thou thunder with a Voice like Him? Deck now thy self with Majesty and Excellency, and array thy self with Glory and Beauty. Cast abroad the Rage of thy Wrath, and behold every one that is proud, and abase him. Look on every one that is proud, and bring him low; and tread down the Wicked in their place. Hide them in the Dust together, and bind their Faces in secret. Then will I also confess unto thee, that thine own Right-hand can save thee.* Since therefore no Man is able to secure himself against the Divine Power; it follows,

A Thanksgiving SERMON,

that they are perfectly safe, who have the Almighty for their Friend; and consequently, that his *irresistible Strength* renders his *Loving-Kindness* valuable beyond all conception.

3. God's *Loving-Kindness* is excellent to admiration, in that it is constant and unchangeable. That we may be assur'd of this Truth, we are inform'd, 1 John 4. 8. that *God himself is Love*; signifying, that he can as soon change his own perfect Nature into Imperfection, as cease to bear a tender Concern for his Creatures. The meanness and misery of their Circumstances, make them the proper Objects of his Compassion. He does not chuse to heap his Favours on the Prosperous, and neglect the Unhappy, as being ashamed of them. Nor is he tir'd with giving his Blessings to any Man, or any Society of Men; so as to forsake them at length, because he has no more good things to bestow. 'Tis not the length of Time, nor the plenty of Favours already granted, which can exhaust the Divine Sufficiency, or make him change the Warmth of his Love into Coldness and Indifference. He is still the same after many Generations, as he was at first; and by the Immutability of all his Attributes, particularly of his Love, gives encouragement to every Age of the World to trust in his Protection. Thus, in the latter Clause of our Text, *The Children of Men* are said to *trust in the Shadow of God's Wings*. Which expression may, without force, be said to signify, that not only Men in one Generation may find reason for this reliance upon the Almighty, but likewise their *Children*, their *Posterity* in all Ages.

But, after all, there is one thing which will stop the Current of divine Favours, which yet infers no mutability in God, but in Men; namely, their Obstinacy and Rebellion against him. The Love of God to his Creatures is still unchangeable; he is always desirous of doing them good, and for that purpose bestows his Benefits upon them. But when, after long trials, they produce no good Fruits, but the contrary; 'tis Love and Kindness to withdraw those Blessings which had been abus'd. When nothing besides
Affliction,

Affliction, will bring Men to serious Thoughts; 'tis a special Favour if God is pleas'd to deprive them of their darling Enjoyments. However, the Perfections of the Divine Nature cannot disagree with each other; and therefore the Love of God will always proceed according to the Rules of Holiness. Tho therefore the Almighty frequently bestows Plenty and Prosperity upon wicked Men in this World, it is not out of any complacency or delight which he takes in their Iniquity: And tho he shou'd punish the finally Impenitent with an everlasting Separation from his Favour, he cannot so properly be said to hate the Sinner, as the Sin. If Men will indeed, by their own choice, make Sin, as it were, a part of themselves; if they will not by all the Methods which are us'd by a gracious God, be separated from it, tho he should eternally punish their Disobedience, yet his Love to Mankind would appear to be unchangeable, inasmuch as he ever took all honourable Methods to make them happy.

Nor is it any sign of Mutability in the Love of God, that he sometimes permits the best Men to endure extreme Hardships from wicked hands. For tho Temporal Blessings, which God is often pleas'd to bestow on wicked Men, and withhold from the truly Pious, are Instances of his general Love to Men, and capable of being improv'd to higher Advantages; yet that Loving-Kindness which makes Men really happy, does not consist in these things. A Man who gives up himself to wicked Courses, is unhappy in the abundance of all these Enjoyments; while the sincerely Religious is happy under the want of all such Advantages, from a sense of the Divine Favour to his Soul. 'Tis often in much Mercy that our heavenly Father withholds earthly Comforts from his Children; supplying them in the mean while, with the larger Portion of divine Blessings. Tho the Wisdom of God chuses various Methods and Times for bestowing different kinds of Favour, yet his Love, especially towards those who faithfully serve him, is ever constant and unchangeable,

A Thanksgiving SERMON,

Mat. 5. 45.

4. The Loving-Kindness of God is excellent, as it is bestow'd on such who do not in the least deserve it. This is true both as to Spiritual and Temporal Blessings. The Almighty is not only gracious to the Unthankful and the Evil, while *he suffers the Rain to descend, and the Sun to shine in common upon the Just and Unjust*; but while he bestows the Consolations of his Spirit upon the best of his Servants, he favours them infinitely beyond their Deserts. For there is not any spiritual Blessing which the best of Men have not forfeited by their ungrateful Behaviour: they are either apt to ascribe too much to their own Merit, or else to forget and disregard the divine Goodness which they have tasted. From the first serious Impressions they receive, to the last day of their Lives, every Motion of the good Spirit with which they are favour'd, is the effect of free and undeserved Bounty. What then shall we say, concerning those who live in a constant opposition to the divine Precepts, who daily sin against God with a high hand? How far must they be from deserving any Temporal Blessing, but especially from meriting any operation of the Divine Spirit? And yet so excellent is God's Loving-Kindness, that he liberally bestows both the one and the other.

In these several respects the Loving-Kindness of God appears to be admirable in it self: but it is likewise,

2/y. Excellent in comparison with the Affection of Men, and their Behaviour towards each other. The supreme Excellency will appear on the part of God, not only if we compare his Loving-Kindness, and the Effects of it, with the Behaviour of the worst of Men, but even of those who bear the nearest Likeness to God himself. The reason of which is manifest; namely, because the Divine Being is infinitely perfect in all his Ways; whereas our finite Natures, especially as deprav'd by Sin, are attended with many Infirmities which enter into the most valuable part of our Character, and render it impossible to bear any other than a faint resemblance of Divine Perfection.

The

The great Ruler of the World has made it our Duty, and accordingly 'tis our Glory, to love our Neighbours as our selves. But tho' we should be acknowledg'd to bear the most sincere and the most ardent Affection to each other; tho' we had the most earnest desire of doing Good, yet our Skill and our Ability are in many cases very deficient: All the Love, all the Kindness, which in many Circumstances we are able to shew, is only to lament, with our Friends, that we cannot help them. We have not Wisdom enough to extricate from all Difficulties, nor have we always sufficient Power to put in execution those Contrivances which might very probably succeed. Our best Abilities may be overpower'd with numbers; and such Snares may be laid for our Friends, as neither they nor we can break thro' without committing a moral Evil. The usefulness of our Affection is confin'd within a narrow compass: and therefore tho' for Sincerity and Constancy, it is often valuable farther than its Power extends; yet can it not for its Excellency bear the least proportion with the Loving-Kindness of God. Again, the Love of the best Men is too apt to wax cold: whether this proceed from the discouragements they meet with in prosecuting their kind Intentions; or whether from regard to their own Security; or from whatever cause it arises. Whatever is the occasion, we must acknowledg, that *our Goodness is too like the Morning-Cloud, and that as the early Dew it goeth away.* Yet farther, the most generous of all Men cannot compare with the divine Condescension in the display of Mercy; for there is not the meanest and most unworthy Wretch upon Earth, who does not deserve more regard from the greatest of his Fellow-Creatures, than the best of Men can pretend to claim at the hand of God. We must therefore readily acknowledg, that his Loving-Kindness infinitely exceeds the best of our Affections. Hof. 6. 4.

But if there be so vast a difference here, how opposite are the Inclinations of deceitful and cruel Men, to those of the blessed God? how contrary their Behaviour to his? Whatever degrees of Knowledge, whatever advantages of Authority and Power they possess,

A Thanksgiving SERMON,

possess, are imploy'd to do Mischief, to procure the Destruction instead of the Happiness of their Fellow-Creatures. And what renders them still the more opposite to the Divine Pattern, is, that when they have taken the strongest Resolutions to ruin others, and while they are using all possible means to effect their malicious Designs, they often pretend the greatest Friendship, that so they may the more effectually betray them at unawares. Moreover, as no Man can pretend to deserve Benefits at the Hand of God, and yet he bestows them liberally even upon the Ungrateful: cruel and deceitful Men generally chuse to imploy their Hypocrisy, and vent their Malice against those, who are upon every account the most valuable. While therefore we compare the Goodness of God with the Malice of unreasonable Men, we have abundant reason to join with the Psalmist in admiration, and say, *How excellent is thy Loving-Kindness, O God!*

Having thus consider'd the Supreme Excellency of God's Loving-Kindness; a few words will suffice to shew,

II. The Incouragement this affords for Men to trust in the Divine Protection; *Therefore the Children of Men put their Trust under the shadow of thy Wings.*

'Tis manifest, that by this figurative Expression, Defence and Protection are understood. 'Tis a Similitude taken from those Creatures, who to secure their Young from Danger, hide them under their Wings. When the Psalmist says, that from the Excellency of God's Loving-Kindness, Men *do put their Trust under the shadow of his Wings*, he signifies, that Men in general are sensible of the Safety of trusting in his Protection; agreeable to the common Observation, that even wicked Men in distress are apt to call upon God for Help. However, these words plainly intimate, that there is sufficient Incouragement for trusting in that Protection which the Almighty is able and ready to afford.

As for the Trust it self, to which we are here incourag'd, I can see no reason to conclude, it signifies

nifies a firm Belief that we shall be at all times deliver'd from any threatenng Mischief, or from all the unhappy Circumstances which may overtake us. That kind of Faith, tho it was frequently exercis'd and encourag'd while our Saviour was upon Earth, does not appear to have been design'd for all succeeding Ages. It answer'd a very good end in those days; namely, as the Effects of it confirm'd the Truth of Christ's Doctrine. Thus, in the 9th Chapter of St. Mark's Gospel, we are told, that a young Man, possess'd with a dumb and deaf Spirit, was brought before our Lord to be heal'd; that when the Father had represented his Son's Case, and implor'd Compassion and Assistance, Jesus said to him, *ver. 23. If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.* Upon which we are inform'd in the next Verse, that *the Father of the Child cry'd, and said with Tears, Lord, I believe, help thou mine Unbelief!* and soon after we find that the evil Spirit was dispossest. To the same purpose were those Expressions so frequent in our Saviour's Mouth, *According to thy Faith be it unto thee;* and, *Thy Faith hath made thee whole.* Faith, in these Instances, manifestly signifies an Assurance of receiving those very things which were wanted and desir'd. Further, some have been apt to conclude, that our Lord promises the same Advantage to his Disciples in time to come, which his immediate Followers then enjoy'd; while he tells them, *Mat. 21. 21, 22. Verily, I say unto you, if ye have Faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the Fig-Tree, (which was lately wither'd at the Word of Christ) but also if ye shall say unto this Mountain, be thou remov'd, and be thou cast into the Sea, it shall be done: And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in Prayer, believing, ye shall receive.* But still we have more reason to believe that these things were chiefly confin'd to that Age, wherein the Apostles and Evangelists, as well as our Lord himself, were by Miracles to confirm the Faith, than that they were design'd to extend to all Generations; because then there would be little or no room left for the exercise of Patience under Affliction.

Upon

A Thanksgiving SERMON,

Upon this account, tho the Almighty may now and then, since the first Ages of the Gospel, have given some peculiar Incouragements to such extraordinary Acts of Faith, as then were frequent; yet we have not sufficient ground to conclude, that merely our trusting or believing shall always secure to us those temporal Deliverances and Advantages of which we stand in need.

The Trust to which our Text, and most other Places, which speak of confiding in the Almighty, incourage us, is such a one whereby in general we believe that he is able and ready to do us good; and that if Deliverance from any present Calamity, or the bestowing of any temporal Favour, will be for our real Service, and for the Glory of God, it shall be granted. The whole Current of Scripture teaches us to ask for temporal Blessings with a Reserve, and a Resignation to God's Will.

And yet, even this general Trust is sufficient to bear up the Mind, and support it under the Evil of any Calamity which may befall us. We cannot wish for more than an Interest in the Loving-Kindness of God; while we are convinc'd that his Wisdom and Power can procure for us whatever we stand in need of. There is sufficient Incouragement for *putting our Trust under the shadow of his Wings*; since tho we may already have receiv'd many Favours from Heaven, we have no reason to fear that the Fountain is drawn dry, or the Almighty grown weary of doing good. Tho we should be sunk beneath the regard of Men, tho our Acquaintance should be asham'd of us, and our Friends forsake us; yet we are assur'd the Almighty has not forgotten us. Tho we can claim no good thing at his hand; yet he is ready and desirous to do us good. Nay, tho we have behav'd our selves ungratefully, yet he offers to be gracious to us: and we shall undoubtedly receive the Effects of his Bounty, if we will only so far conform to his reasonable Demands, that he may bestow them consistently with his own Purity. If therefore we are assur'd that God himself watches over us for good, that he perfectly knows what will be

be most for our Advantage: if we are assur'd that he is able, and lastly that he is ready to bestow it upon us, according to the Direction of his infinite Wisdom; we cannot desire greater Incouragement to trust in him under the worst of Difficulties.

Thus we have seen in general, how solid a Foundation the Loving-Kindness of God affords for trusting in his Protection. Let us now consider what special occasions the return of this Day affords us for this kind of Trust in God.

If *David* found reason to admire the Excellency of God's Loving-Kindness, while it yielded him only the Prospect of Deliverance; much more may we, who have several times experienc'd the good Effects of it. There are two extraordinary Instances, which we are this Day particularly to remember: The Discovery of the Poudre-Treason in the year 1605, and the Rescue of these Nations from Popery and arbitrary Power, by the Revolution, of a much latter date.

It may be useful to observe, that our Danger in both these Cases, arose from Men of the same Character with *David's* Enemies.

He represents them, in the beginning of the Psalm, as *wicked Men, whose Transgressions shew that the Fear of God is not before their Eyes*; as being bold and without shame, *flattering themselves in their own Eyes*, Psal. 36. 1. *till their Iniquity be found out to be hateful*; as *treacherous and deceitful*; as *taking no delight in doing good*; but, on the contrary, *devising Mischief on their Beds, and setting themselves with pleasure about the execution of their malicious Designs*. Ver. 2. Ver. 3. Ver. 4.

Now tho I am far from supposing that every Man, who professes himself a Romanist, is ungodly, and treacherous and cruel; yet any one who will take the pains to consider the Principles establish'd by their own Councils, and defended by the avow'd Champions of their Faith, will see that they have made *Impiety and Immorality, Deceit and Cruelty*, parts of their Religion; and whoever observes the Methods they have taken to establish it in the World, will find

A Thanksgiving SERMON,

that the Practices of those, who are thorow Papists, exactly agree to such horrid Principles.

The greatest part of the common People, 'tis to be hop'd, have not attain'd to these Depths of Satan: but, however, when there is a Turn to serve, they seldom fail to go which way soever their spiritual Guides are pleas'd to direct. Which Facility of the People is owing to the Ungodliness of that Principle whereby they are taught, that the Priest, let him be ever so vile (a) a Sinner himself, can either remit (b) or retain (c) their Sins at his pleasure: which is indeed as much as to say, that he has the power of saving or damning their Souls. 'Tis the same ungodly Principle by which the Church of Rome, whether in the name of the Pope (d), or of a General Council, or of both (e) together, assumes to her self *Infallibility*, and an *uncontrolable Power* (f) of judging and determining Controversies: For any Man,

(a) Si quis dixerit, Sacerdotes qui in peccato mortali sunt, potestatem ligandi & solvendi non habere — *Anathema sit.* Council. Trid. Sess. 14. Can. 10.

(b) Si quis dixerit, Absolutionem Sacramentalem Sacerdotis non esse actum Judiciale, sed nudum ministerium pronuntiandi & declarandi remissa esse peccata confitenti, inodo tantum credat se esse absolutum; aut Sacerdos non serio sed joco absolvat; aut dixerit non requiri Confessionem poenitentis, ut Sacerdos eum absolvere possit, *Anathema sit.* Can. 9.

(c) Si quis negaverit, Confessionem Sacramentalem, vel institutam, vel ad salutem necessariam esse jure divino — *Anathema sit.* Can. 6.

Non est Poenitentiae Sacramentum absolute ad salutem necessarium, ut Baptismus; sed iis tantum, qui peccati rei sunt. *Aquin. Sum. Part. 3. Qu. 84. Art. 5.*

(d) Non solum in Decretis Fidei errare non potest summus Pontifex; sed neque in praeceptis morum quae toti Ecclesiae praescribuntur; & quae in rebus necessariis ad salutem, vel in iis quae per se bona vel mala sunt, versantur. *Bellarmin. de Roman. Pont. lib. 4. cap. 5.*

Si Papa erraret praecipiendo vitia, vel prohibendo virtutes; teneretur Ecclesia credere vitia esse bona, & virtutes malas, nisi vellet contra Conscientiam peccare. *Ibid.*

(e) Fide Catholica tenendum est, Concilia generalia a summo Pontifice confirmata, errare non posse, nec in fide, nec in moribus. *Bell. de Conc. Auct. lib. 2. cap. 2.*

The Cardinal affirms the same, concerning particular Councils, when confirm'd by the Pope. *Lib. 2. de Conc. Auct. cap. 5.*

(f) Cuncta per mundum novit Ecclesia, quoniam quorumlibet sententia ligata Pontificum; sedes beati Petri Apostoli jus habeat resolvendi, utpote quod de omni Ecclesia fas habeat judicandi, neque cuiquam de ejus

Man, who had the Fear of God before his Eyes, would never, either by himself, or in conjunction with others, dare thus to usurp the Divine Prerogative. The same daring Impudence taught them to affront the Almighty, by yielding Divine Honours to the Work of Mens Hands; by establishing the Worship of the *Host* (g), which they themselves acknowledg is no Deity, till the Priest has pronounc'd (h) the words of Consecration. This indeed is a strain of Impiety, which one would think could never enter into the Heart of Man; for by it the Priest is manifestly plac'd above God himself, having it in his power to make a God when he pleases. Under the same head of Impiety must be rank'd the *Worship of Angels* (i), and *Saints**, and their *Images* (k), establish'd by the *second Nicene Council*. For tho

ejus liceat judicare judicio: siquidem ad illam de qualibet mundi parte canones appellari voluerint, ab illa autem nemo sit appellare permiffus. *Gelas. I. Papa ad Episcopos Dardania, apud Einn. Concil. Paris. 1636. Tom. 5. p. 640.*

(g) De modo autem loquendi, fatemur Sacramentum dici adorandum; ut Concilium Trid. loquitur. Sed hoc exponitur dupliciter. Qui enim sentiunt Sacramentum Eucharistiæ formaliter, esse Corpus Christi, ut est sub illis speciebus, concedunt etiam formaliter Sacramentum dici adorandum. Qui autem docent Sacramentum Eucharistiæ formaliter esse species panis & vini, ut Christum continent; illi docent consequenter Sacramentum Eucharistiæ materialiter esse adorandum. *Bell. de Sacram. lib. 4. cap. 29.*

(h) Cum Eucharistiæ Sacramentum non nisi in persona Christi conficiatur; Sacerdotum, quibus hæc potestas concessa est, proprium munus est illud conficere. *Aquin. Sum. Part. 3. Quæst. 82. Art. 1.*

(i) Posteaquam Deus homo factus est, & omnes Angeli hominem in Christo adorare cœperunt, noluerunt ipsi ab hominibus adorari; & præcipue ab Apostolis, aliisque summis viris. — Nec tamen sequitur, nos malefacere, si Angelos adoremus: nam & nos recte illos adoramus, & ipsi recte adorari recusant. *Bellarmin. lib. 1. cap. 1. de Sanct. Beat.*

* Sancti, sive Angeli, sive homines, pie atque utiliter a viventibus invocantur. *Id. lib. 1. de Sanct. Beat. cap. 19.*

(k) Ομολογούμενος καὶ ἀναμνηστικῆς ὑποδεκτὸν καὶ εὐάρεστον εἶναι ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ, τὰς εἰκονικὰς ἀνατυπώσεις τῆς οἰκονομίας τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ τῶν ἀρχόντων Θεοτόκου καὶ αἱ παρθένου Μαρίας, ἧς τε τιμίων ἀγγέλων, καὶ πάντων τῶν ἁγίων, προσκυνεῖν καὶ ἀσπάζεσθαι· καὶ εἰ τις μὴ οὕτως ἔχει, ἀλλ' ἀμνηστικῶς καὶ νοσοῦντι πλεονάζοντων εἰκόνων προσκύνῃσιν, τῆτον ἀναθεματίζει ἡ ἀγία καὶ οἰκουμένη Σύνοδος. *Concil. Nicen. secund. Act. 7.*

A Thanksgiving SERMON,

the *Romish* Doctors deny that *Images* are *Idols*; and tho they generally affirm they do not adore them, or the Persons they represent, in the proper sense of the word; yielding them only *Reverence*, and reserving *Adoration* for God alone: yet the common People cannot understand their trifling Distinction between *λατρεία* and *δουλεία*, as indeed it was not design'd they should. The establish'd Practice of their Church shews, that this is a mere Evasion. For if *praying for the Pardon of Sin, and the conferring of Grace*, be not *Worship*, in the proper sense of the word, it will I believe be very difficult to know what *Adoration* means; and yet this Service is in both Particulars paid to the Virgin (*k*) *Mary*, and to the Cross (*l*) of Christ, in the express words of their *Breviary*. Which shews that the Church of *Rome* does not adhere to the Distinction and the different Application of *Worship* and *Reverence*; tho they loudly cry it up, while they go about to defend their Idolatry. And 'tis plain this Practice of the Church gave *Thomas Aquinas* the confidence to affirm, that the same (*m*) *Worship* is due to the Cross, as to Christ himself; and that we are to hope for Salvation, as much from the one as from the other. We have therefore very little reason to doubt, but that the Popish Multitude does as properly, in the strictest sense of the word, *worship* *Ima-*

(*k*) Solve vincla reis, Profer lumen pacis, Mala nostra pelle, Bona cuncta posce. *And a little farther*, Virgo singularis, Inter omnes mitis, Nos culpis solutos, Mites fac & castos. *Offic. parv. B. Maria, Edit. Antwerp. 1685. 8vo. pag. 143.*

Maria Mater Gratia, Dulcis parens clementia, Tu nos ab hoste protege, Et mortis hora suscipe. Ibid. pag. 145.

(*l*) O crux ave spes unica, Hoc passionis tempore, Piis adauge Gratiā, Reisque dele crimina. *Breviar. Rom. Sub. ante Dominio, Passionis.*

(*m*) Illi exhibemus patriæ cultum, in quo ponimus spem salutis. Sed in Cruce Christi ponimus spem salutis; cantat enim Ecclesia, O crux ave spes unica, hoc passionis tempore, auge piis justiciam, reisque dona veniam. Ergo Crux Christi adoranda est adoratione patriæ. *Aquin. Sum. Part. 3. Qu. 25. Art. 4.*

Adoratur eadem adoratione cum Christo, sc. adoratione patriæ. Et propter hoc etiam Crucem alloquimur & deprecamur, quasi ipsum crucifixum. *Ibid.*

ges, and the Persons represented by them, and entertain as great Expectations from that Service, as the Heathens of old did in worshipping their *Idols*.

In all these Particulars, the *Romish* Religion strikes directly at the Honour of God. And as in many other Instances it gives Patronage to the grossest Immoralities; 'tis plain that the Assertors of it *banish'd the Fear of God from their Minds*. Not to insist upon the *dethroning (n) of Princes*, and *absolving Subjects from their Allegiance*; a Principle which has been often display'd in this Nation, particularly in the Reigns of King (o) *Henry VIII.* and Queen (p) *Elizabeth*; that one Doctrine of *Indulgences* gives Encouragement to all moral Evils. For why should any Man, who has Money enough to buy a Pardon, scruple to commit any Sin to which his wicked Heart inclines him? How is it to be suppos'd that corrupted Nature should lay it self under the least Restraint; if a Man can once believe that he is acquitted from all Guilt in the sight of God, and consequently in no danger of (q) Punishment, by virtue of that Licence which his Priest has sold him, or which the Pope has annex'd to the reading of such and such

(n) Si Dominus temporalis requisitus & monitus ab Ecclesia, terram suam purgare neglexerit ab hac hæretica pravitate, per Metropolitani & comprovinciales Episcopos Excommunicationis vinculo innoderetur. Et si satisfacere contempserit infra annum, significetur hoc summo Pontifici, ut extunc ipse vasallos ab ejus fidelitate denunciaret absolutos, & terram exponat Catholicis occupandam, qui eam exterminatis hæreticis sine ulla contradictione possideant, & in fidei puritate conservent, salvo jure domini principalis, dummodo super hoc ipse nullum præstet obstaculum, nec aliquod impedimentum opponat; eadem nihilominus lege servata circa eos qui non habent dominos principales. *Council. Lateran. maxim. 1215. sub Innocent. III. cap. 3.*

(o) See Pope Paul III. his Sentence against King Henry VIII. Burnet's Hist. Ref. vol. I. p. 166. of the Collection.

(p) See Pope Pius V. his Bull for deposing Queen Elizabeth. Burnet, vol. II. pag. 377. of the Collection.

(q) 2 Cor. 2. Nam & quoad donavi, si quid donavi, propter vos in persona Christi; *Gloss. i. e. ac si Christus donasset.* Sed Christus poterat relaxare absque omni satisfactione pœnam peccati: ut pater, *Joann. 8. de muliere adultera*: ergo & Paulus, ergo & Papa potest; qui non est minoris potestatis in Ecclesia, quam Paulus fuit. *Aquin. Summ. Suppl. Qu. 25. Art. 1.*

A Thanksgiving SERMON,

Exod. 20.

Prayers, or helping (r) to build a Church, or attending (s) upon publick Worship in it? Monstrous Ungodliness! that when the Eternal God charges us, saying, *Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not commit Adultery*; a mortal Man should undertake to dissolve these Obligations, and grant a Commission to murder, to defraud, and to commit all manner of Uncleaness! And this not only for a small time, but for many years to come; nay for a Man's (t) whole Life! This is the plain Consequence of Indulgences; as Covetousness was the Foundation of them. The usual Exposition, whereby the *Romish* Doctors pretend they are design'd for nothing more than to abate something of the temporal Pains due to Sin, particularly the Pains of *Purgatory*, will do them no Service: For if this be true, why does the Church of *Rome* pretend to give Plenary (u) Indulgence, and intire Remission of all Sins? And what did those Popes mean who sent out their Bulls upon this Errand? 'Tis manifest, the

(r) Aliquando datur Indulgentia, quod qui dat auxilium ad aliquam fabricam erigendam, tertiam partem remissionis peccatorum consequatur. *Aquin. Summ. Suppl. Qu. 25. Art. 1.*

(s) Quandoque datur hoc modo Indulgentia, quod qui vadit ad aliquam Ecclesiam, septem annos remissionis consequatur. *Ibid.*

(t) Si in aliqua Ecclesia sit Indulgentia perennis, sicut in Ecclesia B. Petri, 40 dierum; tunc quoties aliquis vadit toties Indulgentiam consequitur. *Id. ibid.*

(u) Plenaria Indulgentia datur solum a summis Pontificibus, quod fit diversimode. Aliquando enim datur utiliter omnibus certum locum visitantibus, simpliciter, i. e. pro omni tempore: sicut communiter dicitur de visitantibus Sepulchrum Domini. — Aliquando datur Indulgentia plenaria omnibus visitantibus certum locum certa die infra annum; ut concessum est Ecclesie S. Mariæ. — Tertio modo datur Indulgentia plenaria omnibus facientibus certum opus: puta assumentibus Crucem ad bellandum contra Infideles; vel euntibus vel mittentibus bellatores contra illos, vel dantibus certam summam Pecuniæ elemosynaliter pro tali opere, vel alio pio negotio. — Quarto modo datur certis & determinatis sive nominatis Personis, facientibus infra Annum vel aliud tempus in Bulla taxatum, certas elemosynas & jejunia, vel alia pia opera orationum. — Quinto, &c. *Antonin. Repertor. Part. 1. tit. 10. sect. 4.*

A famous Example of Plenary Indulgence may be seen in Lib. 5. Extravag. Commun. cap. 1. granted by Pope Boniface VIII. to all such as should, in the first Year of each Century, visit the Churches of St. Peter and St. Paul. Non solum plenam, & largiorem, immo plenissimam

the People are taught to expect a perfect (x) Freedom from all danger, so long as the Indulgence lasts; and therefore 'tis no better than a Commission to perform whatever Sin a Man is inclin'd to the mean while. And whether the Priests believe the Validity of these Commissions or not, Care is (y) taken that they may not lose their Privilege.

But farther, the *Romish* Religion is built upon Falshood and Deceit; as appears by the innumerable Multitude of Lying Miracles, upon which it lays so great a stress, by its pretending to keep close to the Scriptures in one Point, and not only forsaking, but opposing it in many others; and by that avow'd Principle, that no Faith is to be kept with Here-ticks.

The Popish pretence to Miracles is too ridiculous an Argument to need confuting. And as to any pretended Zeal for adhering to the Scriptures, in the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*: if that were not so gainful a Doctrine as it is; yet since *Traditions* (z) are set at least upon an equal foot with the Sacred Writings; since the Church of *Rome* places her self above the Scripture, by pretending it receives its Authority from her Judgment; since Popery establishes many

mam omnium suorum concedemus & concedimus veniam peccatorum. Which is confirm'd in the next Chapter by Clement 6. who reduces the Jubilee to every fiftieib Tear, and includes the Lateran Church. Statuentes ——— ut qui ——— Devotionis causa visitaverint ——— plenissimam omnium peccatorum suorum veniam consequantur.

(x) Dicendum quod ille qui Indulgentias suscipit, non absolvitur simpliciter loquendo, a debito pœnæ; sed datur sibi unde debitum solvat. *Aquin. Sum. Suppl. qu. 25. art. 1.*

(y) Prælati ——— potest uti Indulgentia, quam pro aliis facit. *Id. Suppl. qu. 25. art. 4.*

(z) [Sancta Synodus] Orthodoxorum Patrum exempla sequuta, omnes libros tam veteris quam Novi Testamenti (cum utriusque unus Deus sit auctor) nec non Traditiones ipsas, tum ad Fidem, tum ad Mores pertinentes, tanquam vel ore tenus a Christo, vel a Spiritu Sancto dictatas, & continua Successione in Ecclesia Catholica conservatas, *pæri pietatis affectu ac reverentia suscipit ac veneratur.* Concil. Trident. Sess. 4. Decr. 1.

Si quis autem ——— Traditiones prædictas sciens ac prudens contempserit, Anathema sit. *Ibid.*

Prin-

A Thanksgiving SERMON,

Principles directly contrary to the Scripture (a); and since it forbids, under severe Penalties, the common Peoples reading the Scriptures without a special Indulgence for some parts; and then allows them no power of judging for themselves (b); 'tis not uncharitable to conclude, that the Zeal of the Patrons of the Popish Religion for the Holy Scriptures, is only pretence, and that their whole management here is treacherous and deceitful.

But how will the *Romish* Clergy defend their Religion from establishing Falshood and Treachery, while it teaches, that no Faith is to be kept with Hereticks (c); and while all those are look'd upon as Hereticks, who do in the least Point dissent from their Church? Must I lose the common Rights of Mankind, because I cannot believe as the Church believes? Does any moral Obligation change its Nature, by virtue of one Party's being a Protestant, and the other a Papist? No certainly: but the Religion of the one emboldens him to evade the force of those Obligations, which the other acknowledges to be sacred and inviolable. The Case of *John Huss* and *Jerom of Prague* in the Council of *Constance*, is so remarkable a proof both of the Principle and Practice of the *Romish* Church

(a) Particularly, the Doctrines of Merit and Satisfaction, contrary to Tit. 3. 8. The Worship of Angels, contrary to Gal. 2. 18.

(b) Præterea ad coercenda petulantia ingenia, decernit [Synodus] ut nemo suæ Prudentiæ innixus, in rebus fidei & morum, ad ædificationem Doctrinæ Christianæ pertinentium, sacram Scripturam ad suos sensus contorquens; contra eum sensum, quem tenuit & tenet Sancta Mater Ecclesia, cujus est judicare de vero sensu & interpretatione Scripturarum Sanctorum; aut etiam contra unanimem consensum Patrum, ipsam Scripturam sacram interpretari audeat: etiam si hujusmodi interpretationes nullo unquam tempore in lucem edendæ forent. Qui contravenerint, per ordinarios declarentur, & pœnis a jure Statutis puniantur. *Concil. Trid. Sess. 4. Decret. 3.*

(c) Liberantur ab omni Obligatione qui Hæreticis tenebantur astricti. Absolutos se noverint a debito fidelitatis, & Domini, & totius obsequii, quicunque lapsi in Hæresim aliquo pacto quacumque firmitate vallato tenebantur astricti. *Decretal. Gregor. Lib. 5. cap. 16.*

Aliquo pacto. Ergo si sub pœna aliquis teneretur eis aliquid solvere certa die; licet non solvat, non incidit in pœnam: & eodem modo si per juramentum. Quod est verum: quia in illa Obligatione & juramento tacite subintelligebatur, si talis permanferat cui communicare liceat. *Gloss. ad idem capitulum.*

in this particular, that it ought not to be omitted. Those two pious Men being summon'd to the Council, had all the assurance of Safety, which the Emperor's Authority, who himself was part of the Council, could afford.

But notwithstanding this, as soon as the Council had them in their power, they condemn'd them for Hereticks, and burnt them alive.

And to shew that this Treachery was agreeable to their Religion, they shortly after pass'd an (d) Aët, importing, That if a Heretick should come to the place of Judgment, who durst not venture without a special assurance of Safety; yet it should be lawful for the Ecclesiastical Power to proceed against, and to punish him as far as they thought just and reasonable. This is a standing Aët of that Council. And the (e) Supreme Head of their Church was as hearty in this Cause, as the Representatives; otherwise he would never have told the Duke of *Lithuania*, whom he suspected of favouring *Huss* and his Followers, that it was a mortal Sin to keep Faith with Hereticks; giving this reason for it, That there can be no Communion between a Believer and an Infidel.

The last Instance I am to consider, wherein the Enemies of our Religion and those of *David* resemble one another, is Malice and Cruelty. This is a Character of their Religion it self, as well as of particular Men who have profess'd it. To prove which we need go no farther than to the Thunderbolt of Excommunication, which it unmercifully throws into

(d) Præfens Sancta Synodus ex quovis salvo conductu per Imperatorem, Reges, & alios sæculi principes Hæreticis vel de Hæresi diffamatis, putantes eosdem sic a suis Erroribus revocare; quocumque se vinculo adstrinxerint concessio, nullum fidei Catholicæ vel Jurisdictioni Ecclesiasticæ præjudicium generari, vel impedimentum præstari posse, seu debere declarat; quo minus dicto salvo conductu non obstante, de hujusmodi Personarum Erroribus inquirere, & alias contra eos debite procedere, eosdemque punire, quantum justitia suadebit, si suos Errores revocare pertinaciter recusaverint; *etiam si de salvo conductu confisi, ad locum venerint judicii, alius non venturi; nec sic promittentem, cum fecerit quod in ipso est, ex aliquo remansisse obligatum.* Concil. Constantin. Sess. 19. apud Binn. Tom. 7. p. 1075.

(e) Quod si tu aliquo modo inductus, defensionem eorum suscipere promissisti: scito, te dare fidem Hæreticis, violatoribus fidei Sanctæ, non potuisse; & peccare mortaliter, si servabis: quia *fidei ad infidelum non potest esse ulla Communio.* Martin. V. Papa ad Alexand. Lithuanie Ducem, apud Cochlar. Hist. Hussitar. lib. 5.

A Thanksgiving SERMON,

the face of every one who differs from that Church. The plain intent of which is, to consign the Soul of the Heretick (*e*) to everlasting Destruction. And what makes the poor Heretick's case the more miserable, is, that when he is once condemn'd there is no provision made for his restoration: he is excluded all means of Grace (*f*), and indeed all common Offices of Humanity; for he that harbours and conceals a declar'd Heretick, is in danger of the same Condemnation with him (*g*). This is acknowledg'd a part of Religion in all Popish Countries. But besides the damnation of the Soul; the confiscation of Estate, and the loss of Life it self, amidst a thousand Reproaches and cruel Torments, is the punishment of Heresy, wherever their *holy Inquisition* prevails. An Institution so inexpressibly barbarous, that even so bigotted a Country as *Naples* it self, in the Year 1547. would not suffer the Establishment of it among them (*h*). But Cruelty to the Bodies of Men, is not confin'd to the Inquisition; it being accounted meritorious for a Catholick to destroy a Protestant by open (*i*) Violence, as well as by judicial Process (*k*). That

(*e*) Τὸ ἀνὰ θεοῦ ἐστὶν ἐπὶ τὸν ἕρην, ἢ χαιρεσμός. *Concil. Nicen. secund. Act. 7.*

(*f*) Si pro delictis Anathema quis efficiatur,
Os, orare, vale, communicio, mensa, negatur.

Aquin. Sum. Suppl. qu. 21. art. 1.

(*g*) Thus Pope Leo X. in his Bull against Luther, commands all Ecclesiastical Persons, and likewise all Kings, Potentates, Communities, Cities, and Places, and their Inhabitants, and all Persons throughout the World; to apprehend and send to him Martin Luther, and all who adher'd to, receiv'd, or harbour'd him; And this under the Penalty of being accounted and punish'd as notorious and obstinate Hereticks. Moreover, all Cities, and other Places, especially Churches and Religious Buildings, to which Luther or any of his Adherents should betake themselves, are by this Bull put under an Ecclesiastical Interdict, during the time he or they remain in them, and for three days after. *Binn. Concil. Gen. & Prov. Tom. 9. pag. 174.*

(*h*) Perizon. Hist. Sec. sextidec. p. 377, 378.

(*i*) Catholici vero, qui Crucis assumpto Characterē, ad Hæreticorum exterminium se accinxerint, illa gaudeant Indulgentia, illoque Privilegio sint muniti, quod accedentibus in terræ Sanctæ subsidium conceditur. *Concil. Lateran. 1215. cap. 3.*

(*k*) Excommunicamus & Anathematizamus omnem Hæresim, &c.

Damnati vero, secularibus potestatibus presentibus, aut eorum ballivis relinquuntur, Animadversione debita puniendi; Clericis prius a suis ordinibus degradatis: i. a quod bona hujusmodi damnatorum, si Laici fuerint, confiscentur; si vero Clerici, applicentur Ecclesiis a quibus Stipendia perceperunt. *Conc. Lateran. 1215. cap. 3.*

time

time is long since come, which our Lord foretold, *John 16. 2. When they who kill'd his Followers, should think they did service to God.* This likewise must be a part of Religion! if any thing so inhuman can go by so sacred a Name.

Such as these are the Principles by which Popery has distinguish'd it self; and the Methods which its Voraries have taken to establish it, exactly agree to the Principles themselves. Particularly, Cruelty appears in the most frightful colours, by the many bloody Massacres set on foot by the Papists in *France, Ireland,* and other Places; by the Martyrdom of a great number of excellent Persons in this Island, at the beginning of the Reformation; by the *Spanish* Invasion in 1588, when the Pope gave his Blessing to the Armada, conferring on it the haughty Name of Invincible; and by many other Instances, wherein it pleas'd God to defeat the Designs of our Enemies, as he did in those two particularly which we now commemorate.

As to the Powder-Plot, we are assur'd from the printed Confessions of those who died by the Hand of Justice, that it was design'd to cut off the King, Lords and Commons at one blow. And particularly, the Person who was to have set fire to the combustible Matter, was it seems, for a considerable time after he was apprehended, (1) only sorry he had not put this horrid Design in execution. They who had contriv'd and carry'd on the Affair, order'd it so that the greatest Blow might be given to this City, while the Flower of the Nation was assembl'd in it, and they have the Opportunity of doing what they pleas'd in the Country while it was left naked. We cannot frame a certain Idea what would have been the Effects of this Treason, if it had not been discover'd in time. In all probability it must have ended in the setting up of arbitrary Power, and a false Religion.

There were indeed but a few Men concern'd in the Management, and even they scarce durst confide in one another; the Design carry'd such a self-condemning Aspect with it. But they had Correspon-

(1) *Manner of the Discovery of the Gun-powder Plot.* Lond. 1679. 80. p. 38.

A Thanksgiving SERMON,

dence, and probably Assistance from abroad, together with the Apostolical Benediction of the Pope to encourage them: And they, poor Wretches, were so fir'd with Zeal for promoting their Mother-Church, as chearfully to spend their Estates, and endanger their Lives, nay their very Souls, for its advancement.

Whatever Truth there may be in the Story of a Correspondence between this and a neighbouring Crown, which might enable the King of *England* to discover the Plot; this does not at all diminish our Enemies Malice, or the Goodness of God in our Preservation. Supposing that two or three Men at Court had Intelligence of the Treason, and of the Time when it was to be put in execution; yet any one of a hundred Accidents might have prevented the timely Discovery, if God had not watch'd over the Nation. The Traitors might have been aware of a Discovery, or their fears might have made them hasten execution sooner than they intended; a sudden disorder might have seiz'd those few Persons who had intimation of the Plot; or some other thing have happen'd, if the Almighty had not interpos'd in our favour. When the Discovery was made, it prov'd to be but a few Hours before it would have been too late, if deferr'd. This account however ought not at all to lessen our esteem for the watchful Care of God's Providence.

But besides this Deliverance of our Forefathers above a hundred Years ago, we now commemorate that Instance of God's Loving-Kindness, whereby our Liberty and our Religion were secur'd to our selves, at a time when these valuable Blessings were expos'd to greater Dangers than probably the Powder-Treason could occasion. If that Blow had been given, and the whole Parliament, together with the King, destroy'd; yef the generality of the Nation being already extremely averse to Popery, would have been exasperated beyond all measure, by such an outrageous Act of Cruelty. They might possibly have united, as one Man, against all Papiſts, and any thing like Popery. But the Measures taken before the Revolution were abundantly more Politick. The Poiſon was contriv'd to work by slow degrees.

The

The utmost Violence was not us'd at first. The People were to be seduc'd by Sophistry, the better to prepare them for the intended Slavery of their Souls and Bodies. And for this purpose, the ridiculous Doctrines of unlimited *Passive Obedience* and *Non-Resistance*, were preach'd and inculcated upon their Consciences, on pain of Damnation. In the mean while care was taken to plant such Men throughout the whole Kingdom, but especially about the City, and at Court, as were fit Tools for serving arbitrary Purposes. And now the Hopes of the Catholicks began to grow sanguine. They could no longer endure any restraint: they could not forbear shewing themselves in their true colours.

It was our unhappiness to have a Prince on the Throne, who had apostatiz'd to the *Romish* Religion, and was bigotted to it; which made him seek all means to promote it. When he observ'd that the People did not look upon either his Example, or the endeavours of his Emissaries, as sufficient Arguments why they should embrace Popery, he betook himself to violent measures; by which he quickly hurry'd the Nation very near its own Ruin, and himself quite out of the Throne. He did not want for prompters to any Mischief; being beset with Counsellors, resolv'd to advance themselves upon the Destruction of their Fellow-Subjects; and who valu'd not how vile Flatteries they were guilty of, or what Effects the Nation might feel, if by those means they could gain their own ends. And so far they had succeeded, that the Laws, which are the Bulwark of our Liberty, were laid aside, and a Dispensing Power exercis'd. No Man's Possession was secure. And as for Religion, tho all Professions were for a while tolerated, to serve a turn; yet it is easy to see, that when once that turn was serv'd, by placing that Religion uppermost which had been most restrain'd, the *Toleration* would have ceas'd. It was now look'd upon as one of the highest Crimes to speak a word against the growing Evil, or in defence of Religion and Liberty. And those Patriots who had the Courage to appear for their Country, were imprison'd as offenders against the King's Majesty.

In this state of Affairs it was, that God in great Mercy

A Thanksgiving SERMON,

cy to the Nation, sent over a DELIVERER. Who was so much the more welcome, in that he rescu'd our Liberties without Bloodshed. This was indeed a remarkable proof of God's powerful influence upon the Hearts of Men, in favour of his own People. There was at that time a numerous Army in the heart of the Nation; part of which was designedly made up of Men who were zealous of running to the greatest Extremities of arbitrary Power, for the support of Popery. Besides, a foreign Force was ready to be transported from a neighbouring Nation. Mean while the Prince who came to our rescue, was attended with so small a number, as might easily have been swallow'd up, had not God been with them, and struck Terror and Amazement into the Enemies Hearts. He landed as on *this Day*, and was receiv'd with inexpressible Joy by all who were sincerely concern'd for the Protestant Religion, and for Liberty. Our Governors testify'd how justly they were affected with the common Deliverance, by appointing solemn Forms of Thanksgiving to Almighty God, *for bringing his late Majesty upon this Day, for the Deliverance of the Church and Nation from Popish Tyranny and Arbitrary Power; for giving him a safe Arrival here, and making all Opposition fall before him, till he became our King and Governour.* And while we call to mind the beginnings, we ought not to forget the good effects of his wise and gentle Administration. Our Liberties are more firmly secur'd by Law than before; and likewise the Protestant Religion is more effectually establish'd, by settling the Succession to the Crown on the illustrious House of *HANNOVER*.

I cannot conclude without observing, in a few words, what Influence the things we have heard, ought to have upon our practice.

1. We are laid under the strongest Obligations to Thankfulness, considering the Excellency of the Favours bestow'd; the impossibility of obtaining them without a Divine Interposition; and the Provocations we had given, for which we might justly expect a quite contrary Treatment. In a free Nation 'tis needless, one would hope, to spend time in setting forth the Value of Liberty, whether Religious or Civil. We

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all reap the Benefit of it ; which is a more effectual Conviction than all the Arguments that can be us'd. However, the natural love of Liberty, and the Right whereby every Man claims it, till forfeited by his own Act, plainly shew that he deserves not the Name of a Man, as knowing nothing of the Dignity of Human Nature, who does not esteem his Liberty the most valuable Blessing of Life. And in the two Deliverances we have been celebrating, the Loving-Kindness, the Power and Wisdom of God did so visibly appear, that as our Friends will not deny it, our Enemies cannot. No more can the best of us all pretend, that we deserve the Blessings which the Goodness of God secur'd to us. Both the present Age and that of our Fathers, have given sufficient Provocation to the Majesty of Heaven, to have made him resolve to forsake us, if he had not been a God of infinite Patience and Long-suffering. Let us therefore testify our Gratitude, by frequently calling to mind the greatness of the Blessings we enjoy, and by taking proper occasions to speak well of the Divine Goodness ; but especially by living a thankful, that is, a holy Life ; by conforming our selves to the Will of Him who has so readily and so undeservedly display'd his Wisdom and Power on our behalf. And further, let us shew the Value we have for our Liberty, and our Thankfulness to God for securing it, by resolving to do whatever lies in our power to perpetuate the Possession of it. *Let us stand fast in the Liberty wherewith Gal. 5. 1. God hath made us free, that we be not intangled again with the Yoke of Bondage.*

2. Let us, as long as we live, trust in the Protection of that God who has already done so great Things for for us. And to comfort us under the sense of our Demerits, let us remember that the Name of God, his Interest and his Glory, are as much concern'd in preserving us, as any People in the World ; so that we may hope, tho not for our sakes, yet for his own Names sake, he will deliver us from any threatening Danger. It must be acknowledg'd, that the Protestant Religion lies at present under many discouragements ; since they who profess it in Popish Countries, have their Persecutions lately renew'd ; and since too many profess'd Protestants make large advances towards Popery,

ry, in Doctrine; in preferring the Rituals of Religion, especially those of human Invention, before the Substance; and in afflicting their Brethren. But however, let us give Glory to God, in believing that he is able to save; and let us hope that he will concern himself in the behalf of all who faithfully serve him.

3. Let us imitate the Loving-Kindness of God, in beneficence to our Fellow-Creatures. Remembring what kind of Enemies we are deliver'd from; while we labour to secure our selves against them for the future, let us resolve not to make our selves the Enemies of Mankind, by becoming like them.

How great aversion soever we retain to the unsoundness of their Principles, let us not hate the Person of any Man. But let us, in obedience to
 Mat. 5. 44. *our gracious Redeemer's Precept, Love our Enemies, bless them that curse us, do good to them that hate us, and pray for them who despitefully use and persecute us.*

Gal. 6. 10. *Especially, let us do good to the Household of Faith:*

2 Cor. 1. 4. *Let us comfort and encourage one another with the Comforts wherewith we our selves are comforted of God.*

And when we can no otherwise be helpful to our afflicted Brethren, let us at least lend them the Assistance of our Prayers and Tears. Let us contribute, as far as we are able, to each others Ease and Happiness: Let no difference of Circumstances in the World, make one despise another; since we are all made of the same Clay: but let this rather incline the more Wealthy to supply the Wants of the poorer sort. And this Duty chearfully perform'd, will be as great a Refreshment to the Giver as to the Receiver: nay, a greater; for our Saviour was wont to say, *'tis more blessed to give than to receive.* Let universal Benevolence appear in our whole deportment. If the most High does not disdain to regard the meanest of his Creatures, let not us despise them. If he forgives our Offences, let us overlook each others Imperfections. Let us take delight in doing all the good we can; and whatever advances we make in our resemblance to the Divine Image, will prove so many additions to our Happiness in the World to come.

Acts 20. 35.

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